

DIME NOVEL BEADLE

HE WAS A REVOLUTIONIST IN THE LITERARY FIELD.

Now He Started the Salmon Baked "Dummers" That Had Such a Big Run Thirty Years Ago—Notable Authors Wrote Stories For Beadle.

A man died almost unnoticed the other day in New York who was, in his prime, a revolutionist in the literary field. I refer to the publisher, Erastus F. Beadle, the father of the cheap novel. Those of us whose memory reaches back to the times before the civil war will recall the fact that the 45 and 50 cent novel was the rule in those days, and the end of paper and printer's ink, which went up with everything else, soon accounted the novel reader to the idea of paying even \$1 or more for his treat.

But through all the Beadle dime novel held its own. It was a little salmon covered duodecimo, rarely illustrated inside, but often with a startling picture underneath the title. In an informal chat with a visitor about ten years ago, Mr. Beadle told most entertainingly the story of his venture in publishing. The idea of the dime novel occurred to him, he said, in 1859, and he began to act upon it in 1860.

"The state of the book market then," he went on, "was peculiar. Every one was publishing books with thick paper and wide margins—trying to see how little they could give their readers for \$1 or \$1.50. Publishers exchanged books and took back such as were not sold. Well, I took the other tack, and thought I would see how much I could give for 10 cents—cash sales, no credit. Every one said the project would fail, but it didn't."

"We first published dime long books, cook books, etiquette books, etc., which we bound in salmon colored cover. No 'yellow covered dimes' were ever sent out by me—the color was salmon. The yellow cover ones were imitations and were a bad lot. Well, after awhile I started the dime novel. Mrs. Ann S. Stephens was the author of the first one—'Mademoiselle'—a prize story published 40 years ago in the Ladies' Companion. I paid her \$250 for the right to reprint the story. We sold 10,000 copies right off and then 20,000."

Mr. Beadle had an editor in his employ named Victor who used to pass upon manuscripts, order special work and the like, just as the editor of a literary weekly or monthly would do it. He was as interested in his chief in recalling their joint undertaking.

"The authors who wrote for us," said he, "were notable persons in their way. We had, for instance, one book by a man who was once a member of the Ohio legislature, another by an ex-governor of the same state. He never wrote us a bad line. Edward S. Ellis—you know him—wrote us our most popular novel. He was a Methodist, and he went to his minister to know whether he could write a dime novel. He was an abolitionist, and he was a bad lot. Well, after awhile I started the dime novel. Mrs. Ann S. Stephens was the author of the first one—'Mademoiselle'—a prize story published 40 years ago in the Ladies' Companion. I paid her \$250 for the right to reprint the story. We sold 10,000 copies right off and then 20,000."

"Yes, I remember," broke in Mr. Beadle, unable to restrain his enthusiasm, "we plastered the country with 'Who is Seth Jones?' and 'The Golden Rule'—high we answered the question with that picture you see on that cover—'I'm Seth Jones.' We sold 60,000 copies of that story right off."

"These novels," Mr. Victor continued, "introduced either historical or local characters. They followed right after Cooper's tales, which suggested them. Mrs. A. M. Demmon wrote historic fiction. Judge Jared Hall of Ohio wrote 'The Slave Sculptor,' a story of Mexico in Montezuma's time—good name for a story. Then there was Clara Augusta. She was a Maine lady and a clever writer. Ellis wrote exclusively for us, and we have paid him as high as \$250 for a novel of 40,000 words."

"Why, you paid better, in proportion to the quantity of matter we accepted, than The Atlantic Monthly. Our stories were very popular, and our yellow covered novels—had books—began to spring up. What did we do then? Oh, we had to kill a few more Indians than we used to, but we held our own against them. Ours were stories of exciting adventure only; there was nothing bad about them. See this article in The North American Review for July, 1864, wherein they are described and criticized. They are pronounced 'exceptionally popular,' and they do not even closely resemble 'to vice or excessive tendence.' The so-called 'cheap libraries' have sent these old style dime novels into the background, though we keep a stock of the best ones on hand still."

"You ask about Mayne Reid? We have a list of his works which would have sunk into obscurity if we hadn't sustained him. He has written certainly 50 stories and sketches for us. He was working for us exclusively for eight or nine years. We made a double number of his 'Scalp Hunters,' one of his most popular stories, reporting it at his request. He retained, of course, the English rights in his works. We never paid him less than \$500 for a story; that was the standard price, though we may have paid him more at times."

"I remember he brought his 'White Squaw' down here one morning and said he must have \$700 for it, and we gave him a check without reading the manuscript, which contained only about 30,000 words. Reid was always in trouble financially, but he was a productive writer, and when he got hard up he would dash off sketches after sketch and come down here with his pockets stuffed. Here is a lot of his manuscript now that has never been printed on this side,"—Kate Field's Washington.

As they saw it, it is noticeable that blind people generally talk as if they had the use of their eyes. A political discussion between two blind men wound up in this fashion: "I don't look at it the way you do." "I see you don't. But I've had my eyes opened."

"Solve I mine, and I don't think I shall see you pulling the wool over them either."

Curly. Thomas Carlyle's face is well known, but the pictures do not, it is said, do justice to the sparkle of his eyes when lighted up in conversation nor to the play of his features when interested in the subject under consideration. His face bore little indication of the dyspepsia to which he was the victim. His cheeks were ruddy, and his whole aspect that of a man in excellent health.

John Randolph of Roanoke had a sparkling voice, he detracted not a little from the effect of his speeches. When he became angry, as he generally did before he got through a speech, he fairly shrieked in wrath.

An excellent quality of illuminating gas has been made from peat.

A New Kind of Cab.

According to a newly invented London cab, the old four wheeled and the hansom alike are to be done away with and their place supplied by a vehicle which combines, it is claimed, the advantages of both without their inconveniences. This new cab is to have four wheels, and while it will have doors on each side, yet the driver will sit up behind, and the view of the occupant will be unobstructed.

The new cab is to be known as the "coupe hansom," and a few have been placed in the streets of London, where they meet with public favor.—New York World.

Three Brothers' Silver Wedding.

An event of a most unusual character was celebrated in Scranton, Pa., recently. The festivities were in honor of the silver wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Koch of that city, and Mr. and Mrs. Peter Koch and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Koch of New York. The three men are brothers and were married in New York on May 3, 1870. A large party of New York relatives were present at the celebration. In connection with the wedding anniversary the sixty-fifth birthday of another brother, John Koch, formerly of New York, was celebrated.—Philadelphia Press.

Mrs. Lease on Her Powers.

Mrs. Lease confides to a reporter that she has known for a good while that she possessed magnetic or hypnotic powers, and that she attributes her success as a public speaker largely to the exercise of the power. She says that on one occasion, while addressing an audience in Iowa, she caught the eye of a well known Republican and hypnotized him so that he came upon the platform, and, under her questioning made a speech corroborating and indorsing all she had said. A woman with so much personal magnetism as that ought not to be at large.—Indianapolis Journal.

Colonial Statue.

The Duchess of Uzès is fashioning a colossal statue of the Virgin. It is to be 61 feet high and is to stand on a rocky cliff on a high mountain on her estate.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Japan's New Title.

Japan shows sufficient shrewdness in driving a bargain to warrant her retaining the title, "England of the Orient."—Washington Star.

Unprofessional.

"But you've got to take into consideration," urged the officer in citizen's clothes, "the fact that 20 men of good repute are prepared to swear the prisoner was not within 50 miles of the scene of the crime when it was committed."

"I don't have to take it into consideration at all," replied the great detective. "It doesn't fit my theory of the case."

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